



South Central District Health

1020 Washington St N * Twin Falls ID 83301

Keeping your family & community healthy

September 13, 2005

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Second Human Case of West Nile Virus Reported in South Central Idaho

South Central District Health is reporting the second confirmed human case of West Nile virus in the Health District this year. The man, who is in his 30s, is a resident of Twin Falls County. The man was not hospitalized and has recovered from the illness.

Prior to the Twin Falls County human case of WNV, South Central District Health reported another human case earlier this month involving a Gooding County woman in her 60's who was hospitalized briefly and has recovered at home. There have also been a total of 15 positive horse cases of West Nile virus in Blaine, Gooding, and Lincoln counties this year. No positive mosquito pools have been reported, although testing continues in several areas of the District. One bird has tested positive for WNV in Lincoln County this year.

So far this season in Idaho, there have been 12 human cases of West Nile virus, 75 positive horses, 17 positive mosquito pools, and 10 positive birds. Human cases have occurred this year in Ada, Canyon, Elmore, Gem, Gooding, Owyhee, Valley, Washington, and now, Twin Falls, counties. There have been no human deaths from WNV in Idaho.

To date, almost every state in the U.S. is now reporting at least veterinary cases of West Nile virus. Nationwide, as of Sept. 6, there have been 821 human cases and 18 human deaths reported. California and South Dakota have the highest number of cases so far this year.

People and animals are infected with the West Nile virus through the bite of an infected mosquito and cannot contract the virus from contact with an infected animal or person. The virus is spread by migrating infected birds, which are bitten by mosquitoes. The infected mosquitoes can then pass the virus on to people and other animals.

Most people infected with the West Nile virus have no symptoms or will only have a mild flu-like illness. Common symptoms of infection include fever, headache, muscle aches, tiredness, nausea and vomiting, eye pain, skin rash, and enlarged lymph nodes. In a small percentage of the

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population, especially people over age 50, the virus can lead to serious illness requiring hospitalization.

To protect themselves, people are advised to:

- Insect-proof their homes by repairing or replacing screens;
- Reduce standing water on their property that provides mosquito breeding habitat, such as bird baths and decorative ponds;
- Cover up exposed skin when outdoors;
- Apply insect repellent approved by the EPA to exposed skin and clothing. Follow instructions on the product label, especially for children;
- Avoid mosquitoes when they are most active between dusk and dawn; and
- Report dead birds to your local Fish and Game office.

Additional information about the virus is available from South Central District Health by calling 208-737-5974. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare web site also offers information on West Nile virus at www.westnile.idaho.gov.

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